

# QDR proposal would cut troops

By MSgt. Gary Pomeroy  
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WASHINGTON—Under the Department of Defense proposal submitted to Congress May 19, the military's two major regional conflict strategy will remain intact, but cost-saving measures for modernization programs will require the active-duty force to be reduced by 60,000 troops, of which 27,000 would come from the Air Force.

The civilian workforce across DOD is slated to drop to 640,000 from 720,000. The proposal also requests authority from Congress for two more rounds of base realignments and closures.

Prior to submitting the congressionally mandated Quadrennial Defense Review to legislators, Defense Secretary William S. Cohen characterized the proposals as "modest, appropriate, prudent and responsible."

"We have difficult tradeoffs," Cohen told a group of military reporters May 15. "We tried to minimize the impact upon the combat forces. We want to make sure that whatever cuts we recommend come out of combat support. Basically, we want to maintain the tooth as strong as we can, so we have tried to structure it in a way that minimizes any cuts in the front of our spear—the tooth—and take it more out of the tail."

## Excess infrastructure

Cohen said that it has been "a virtually unanimous opinion for some time that we've had excess infrastructure." Since 1988, DOD has cut roughly 33 percent from its force structure but 18 percent from the infrastructure. "There's a mismatch there," he said.

"What we've tried to determine is what do we need to do in terms of reforming our operations and support functions in order to save enough money to put into the modernization program," he said.

The QDR is the first major overall assessment of DOD since the Bottom-Up Review was conducted early in the first Clinton administration. That review resulted in DOD's current strategy, which is maintaining a force that can fight two major regional conflicts simultaneously.

Gen. Joseph W. Ralston, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who briefed military reporters with Cohen, lauded the team effort by senior military leadership in compiling the proposal.

## Senior leaders have voice

Cohen and Army Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, chairman of the joint chiefs, "have gone out of their way to make sure that senior military commanders have had a voice in this process," Ralston said, adding that Cohen has met with the joint chiefs, individual service leaders and unified commanders.

"One of the things that the military leaders were united on is the fact that we would much prefer to see cuts in the support side of the house as opposed to the combat force structure," Ralston said.

## Technology not magic

Technology is not a silver bullet or magic elixir that's going to resolve all the potential conflicts we're going to be called upon to deal with, Cohen said. All the high tech equipment in the world is "useless unless we have quality people coming in to the military."

Meeting housing needs, ensuring day care and the availability of schools are crucial, he said. "Readiness and quality of life are very much intertwined."

"We intend to shape world events by being present and if you don't have that forward deployed presence, you have less of a voice and less of an influence. Even though we are depending upon technology to help revolutionize, giving us greater total dominance over any battlefield, we still have to have people. At the very top of the pinnacle we have always placed—in terms of our priorities—people," he said.

## Overall strategy

Regarding the DOD's overall strategy, forward presence in a wide variety of geographic areas is important.

"We have to balance the future needs and the potential and possibilities and promise of tomorrow with today's reality," Cohen said, pointing out that some have argued for a half-million person cut in the force structure.

"You could do that," he said. "What you would do, however, is put at risk our commitments to our allies, and compromise our ability to respond as effectively."

Overall, what happens next is up to Congress, Cohen said.

"We have to present Congress with these choices, saying 'We've looked at it. These are the recommendations—the best military advice that we can come up with.' And if Congress disagrees and says 'No. We don't like that choice'"

## QDR changes may wait until '99

By MSgt. Gary Pomeroy  
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WASHINGTON—Calling the Quadrennial Defense Review process a "journey not a destination" Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman asked a Senate panel May 21 to help ensure that any changes associated with the study not be made until fiscal 1999.

And Fogleman told the Senate Armed Services Committee that if there will be two more rounds of base realignments and closures—as recommended in the study—that they not be dragged out.

## United front

Fogleman and his counterparts from the Army, Marine Corps and Navy presented a united front in support of the Defense Department study submitted to Congress, which must approve any changes that result from the QDR.

Under the congressionally mandated study, the Air Force would reduce its active-duty force by about 27,000 troops. Additionally, the Air Force—and all services—would be required to reduce infrastructure in order to keep modernization programs such as the F-22 fighter program on track.

The Air Force chief of staff emphasized that the public debate associated with the QDR will cause a lot of angst among the troops.

"One of the things that will be most difficult for our troops is the fact that the submission of the QDR report really begins the debate," Fogleman said. "And so between now and December... all of our service newspapers are going to pick up these proposals

and it's going to really churn the force. It would be useful... if we were allowed to have some flexibility... and make that call that says QDR-associated things are generally going to be in fiscal year 1999 and beyond."

## BRAC

Fogleman also addressed the proposal to conduct two more rounds of Base Realignment and Closure Commission, but encouraged lawmakers to be sensitive to their impact on people and communities.

"I support some form of enabling legislation that allows us to draw down our infrastructure," he said. "If we were to get two rounds, my recommendation would be for us to take the maximum number of bases down in the first round. My rationale for that is that all the turbulence that's associated with BRAC—with our communities and with our people—we're far better off getting it out of the way than we are dragging it out."

## Outsourcing, privatization

Fogleman also addressed Air Force's desires to pursue outsourcing and privatization measures. "In our strategic plan called Global Engagement we made a commitment that we would rapidly reduce costs and rethink the way we approach the infrastructure, and outsourcing is the key to that," Fogleman said.

"So one of the key objectives during QDR was to see whether or not we could achieve savings while maintaining a strong defense. We believe the answer is yes. We think we can prove it. We think that the free market—American business approach will help us be innovative, and responsive."